

# **Training Summary**

## **The Art of Listening and Speaking**

### **Fall 2006**

I had the opportunity to attend a one day training session on the topic of listening and speaking. Dr. Terry Paulson, [www.terrypaulson.com](http://www.terrypaulson.com) was the instructor. The following are my notes from that training. Some items are more random thoughts I picked up so don't look for a complete stream of consciousness.

#### Listening

We spend 45% of our time listening, 30% speaking, 16% reading, and 9% writing. The point being effective listeners have the edge. Listening builds trust and relationships. When listening, make a note and promise to get back to people. Remember you are listening to achieve "understanding." True listening eliminates your making false assumptions.

Change yourself, before trying to change others. "When someone calls you a horses ass, don't worry about it. If four people call you it, go and buy a saddle." A memorable quote!

You can retain more from training if you review your notes within four days of attending the training. Make keeper notes that are no more than one page long so that you can quickly review them.

Make a conscious choice to listen. Listen with your eyes. Pay attention—don't multi-task. You can pick up non-verbal clues. Listening is hard work! Note takers make better listeners. Stop pretending to listen! I guess the last one pertains more to us guys.

The work of the leader is to get conflict out into the open in order to move towards solutions. When there is early consensus—this should be a warning sign! There are other opinions, you need to dig deeper for other opinions.

The average person can only listen for 17 seconds. Your brain has the job of figuring things out. We stop to interpret what is being said. Listen louder—by keeping your thoughts focused around the content of the conversation. Keep your comments "on topic."

Remember people are changing so don't assume that they have not "moved on" in their thinking.

Toyota has found that fresh ideas often come from their youngest and newest people. They are “untrained” by our culture.

When you don’t understand, ask a clarifying question.

To get people to listen to you, use some form of the words such as: “important or different” to unlock the listening potential in others.

You are judged by your ability to listen to people you don’t like. Look for the 5% of common ground you can begin to build upon.

Don’t use email to argue. Do it in person or at a minimum over the phone. Too much of communications is not in the words.

Process has more to do with timing, feeling, relationships. This will impact the hard business side of facts, data, results.

What is the difference between someone’s vision and someone’s hallucinations?

Use all your sensory channels to get information.

70% of American workers are afraid to speak up with suggestions.

Disarm anger by:

- Saying, “You’ve got my attention.”
- Take notes
- Keep your voice low.
- Use active listening, repeat their key points

Your most valuable tool in listening is making the person you are listening to comfortable in speaking. Be animated in your listening. Provide body feedback to show you are listening.

Questions show interest! Use “How, why, in what way?” types of questions. Use a word from their last sentence to ask a question.

Rules for a good question:

- Ask and shut up
- Never have just one correct answer
- Respect silence

When interacting with employees instead of just saying “Good job” add, “What do you think made the difference there?”

Test the results of your listening by summarizing your action plan.

Sometimes you have to end a conversation, techniques for this include:

- Ask what time is it?
- Let's summarize what I've heard.
- Use the calendar to follow through.

### Speaking

What action are you looking for people to take?

What is the most positive and engaging you? Use main principles of speaking, don't try to copy others.

To connect with people look them in the eye, pause and look at others. Use people's names – to personalize your message.

Remember that the first four minutes people make a judgment on you. Appearance does matter.

Use your personal stories to get your message across. Stories are what people retain.

Craft your message to have impact. Know if your purpose is to:

- Inform
- Inspire
- Persuade
- Entertain.

Use theatrics if it helps

Optimism is a track record of overcoming obstacles.

People will watch what our are like before and after the presentation. Therefore it is important to be authentic.

Arrive early to meet and greet the audience members. It builds rapport and creates an environment where they are no longer strangers.

You can change your anxiety into excitement.

Being prepared is not the same as being over-rehearsed.

Improv is not really improv. It is rehearsed by preparation.

Capture audience in the beginning. Make the opening to your topic and message powerful.

It is more important for people to have fun than to be funny.

How to tell stories

- Get into the story quickly
- Master the pause

Good presentations are a partnership, not a monolog. Involve your audience.

Ask people to write something down. It gives them some prep time. Prompt people to speak who have not spoken. Ask people what they want to hear about.

Small group exercises: Have them pick someone to partner with that they don't know. People will then follow your instructions.

When answering questions, just don't answer the person who asked the question. Look at people for five seconds and then look at someone else.

Some general tips:

- Smile liberally throughout your speech
- Use more descriptive gestures
- Be more animated than normal
- Be your likeable-self, a winning style

Look for the unhappy people before the event. Ask them for their ideas.

Don't try to get everyone's approval.

Look for opportunities to improve and move on. Don't beat yourself up

Practice—speak publicly every chance you get. Every error is a n opportunity to grow.